Florida Power & Light contracts MJE to help restore power

Florida Power & Light (FPL) assembled the largest restoration workforce in U.S. history; they continued to amass an army that at its peak numbered more than 28,000 hardworking men and women from 30 states and Canada who worked around the clock to get the Florida communities back to normal. M. J. Electric, LLC (MJE) was one of the electrical contractors contracted by FPL to assist in restoration efforts after Hurricane Irma wiped out power in Florida.

Eric Silagy, president and CEO of Florida Power & Light said, “Hurricane Irma was unprecedented by almost every measure – including its size and scope, destructive power and slow movement. Irma’s fierce winds, strong storm surge and flooding knocked out power to more than 4.4 million FPL customers, the largest ever in our history. But, we pulled together and completed the fastest restoration of the largest amount of people by any one utility in U.S. history.”

Even before Irma exited FPL’s service territory, the energy company had restored approximately one million customers, with two million customers restored by the end of the first full day of restoration. The vast majority of customers had their power back on within a week of Irma’s passing – but as is the case in any major restoration effort of Irma’s magnitude, there are some areas where restoration was more difficult and time-consuming.

Over the past three years FPL invested in making the energy grid smarter, stronger and more storm-resilient. They announced losing only about 2,500 poles during Hurricane Irma as opposed to 12,000 during Hurricane Wilma. No hardened transmission structures were lost; these are the backbone of the system. All of FPL’s substations were up and running within a day following Irma.

Information taken from T&D World Magazine online at www.tdworld.com.
I just wanted to thank your company for the unbelievable fast work they did getting our power back up after Irma. In the past, we have been out for many days or weeks after a storm. Great job!
Harry C. of Vero Beach, FL

I live in southeast Florida and we recently lost power for a few days from Hurricane Irma. Some of your linemen were in our neighborhood working hard and long hours to get our power restored. I just wanted to say thank you so much to these guys! It’s not easy leaving one’s family to help people in need, especially to come to super-hot Florida. We are truly grateful for the speedy work you all did. Thank you again,
Jennifer C. of Hobe Sound, FL

I am writing today to express my appreciation for your company. I live in South Florida and was affected by Hurricane Irma. During the week after the storm I noticed many of your company’s trucks in the neighborhood. We were without power for 5 days and that meant we had no air conditioning. I care for my 91 year old mom who was struggling with the heat. I stopped one of your trucks and explained the situation to him. He said they were trying to get it back on by the next day. He was so courteous and professional and five minutes later our power was back. While driving around I saw so many of your company’s trucks everywhere. I spoke to Greg J. of your company and several others who were struggling with our heat. I personally want to thank your company and your dedicated employees who worked twelve hour days to help us. It is employees like yours that proved that during this crisis we came together as a country.
Once again thank you from the bottom of my heart!
Kevin D. of Pembroke Pines, FL

We recently met Sam H. and his crew in Florida. They were helping to restore power after Hurricane Irma. They were very nice and professional. They repaired the lines in our neighborhood. Sam actually called later that day to check our power was restored. We were without power for only a week, which I thought was pretty amazing, as the amount of damage the storm caused state wide. We just wanted to say thank you again to Sam and his crew. Also thank you to your company and the families of the men who came to Florida. Hope everyone made home safely. Thanks again,
Gary and Mary M. of Hawthorne, FL

To your wonderful linemen, crews, and company: I wish to take a moment to send a note from north Florida of my enormous gratitude to you and your families in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. You all worked countless hours of overtime in dangerous situations so that my family’s power and those without power scattered throughout the state could be restored. You traded comfort and safety with your family for uncomfortable working, eating, and living conditions for mine. We rejoiced as we saw your convoys coming to our rescue immediately following the storm, and were filled with gratitude as we saw your convoys finally leaving to head back home. As the daughter of a former lineman of over 20 years, I remember the days without Daddy as he traveled south to assist in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew or north to assist in that of a horrendous snowstorm. As I am aware of your families’ sacrifices, as well, please give them a hug from me, my family, and our grateful state. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart and pray God’s blessings on you all for your kindness and selflessness. Sincerely,
Elaina V. and family of Live Oak, Florida
Hurricane Irma Facts

- Nearly 400 MJE employees were sent to restore power in Florida.
- Category 4 Hurricane.
- 15 million people lost power in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee.
- Began in the Cape Verde Islands on August 30.
- Estimated $100 billion to rebuild Florida.

Hurricane Harvey Facts

- 20 MJE employees went to Texas to help Quanta during cleanup efforts.
- Category 4 Hurricane.
- 13 million people were affected by power outages and flooding.
- Dumped more than 27 trillion gallons of rain over Texas.
- Began as a slow moving tropical storm in the Gulf of Mexico on August 17.
- First major hurricane to strike southern Texas since Celia in 1970.
- Estimated $180 billion to rebuild Texas.

Hurricane Maria

- Category 4 Hurricane.
- MJE has been asked to support a Quanta initiative if and when they are contracted to do so.
- The entire population of Puerto Rico (3.1 million people) were affected.
- Began as a tropical storm on September 16 in the western Atlantic Ocean.
- Strongest hurricane to hit Puerto Rico in more than 80 years.
- Maria also hit the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Turks, and Caicos.
Letter to the Mayor

This is a letter from one of our employees to the Mayor of Cocoa Beach, Florida and the responses to that very thoughtful message.

To: Mayor of Cocoa Beach, Florida  
From: Orlando N. of M. J. Electric, LLC

Mr. Mayor, my name is Orlando N. I was one of the out of state contractors who was assigned to work in the area. I just want to mention, sir, that your constituents are the most down to earth folks I’ve had the pleasure of knowing and of working for in getting their power back on. Their generosity, patience, and utmost hospitality are impeccable. I will take home to Chicago the appreciation the folks demonstrated to me and my crew. I can’t go around to every home due to other outages we must tend to, but if you will, sir, I would appreciate if this message of gratitude was conveyed to these fine folks. We were offered water, Gatorade, food, and even their homes. As I write this email I am choked-up with emotions. Thank you and God bless.

To: Orlando N. of M. J. Electric, LLC  
From: Pat K. – Mayor’s Assistant

Sir, I read your e-mail to the Cocoa Beach Mayor. I am on the main land, Palm Bay, but I want you and your Chicago crew to know how much I, and others, appreciate you all coming to FL to assist with our electric power problems. Thank you all so much. You are our angels. This is what America is about. God Bless You All.

To: Orlando N. of M. J. Electric, LLC  
From: Karyle G. - Principal of Cocoa Beach High School

I wanted you to know that the Mayor of Cocoa Beach sent your e-mail out on his news network. What a kind and wonderful thing you did in writing to the folks in CB. As principal of the local high school, I couldn’t agree more! Hope you get to visit sometime for pleasure – not work.

To: Orlando N. of M. J. Electric, LLC  
From: Jenifer – Resident of Cocoa Beach

I’m one of the many residents that got spanked by Irma this go around, and I have to say, all of you are heroes in our book! Thank you for your time, dedication and hard work as we were in our moment of need. From the bottom of our hearts we are so grateful and appreciative of all you and your colleagues do. The letter you wrote to the city was moving; thank you and the feeling is mutual. Heroes don’t always have capes! In deepest gratitude.

To: Orlando N. of M. J. Electric, LLC  
From: Ben M. – City of Cocoa Beach, Florida

Dear Mr. Nieves, Thanks so much for your kind email, I shared it with our Regional VP at FPL and City Manager/staff; it is going viral on social media. We are blessed to live in such a nice, small town beach community and there are so many stories like this where neighbors help each other. I am very glad you all left your families and came down to help us in our time of need, we truly appreciate it. If there is anything you guys need please call me on my cell directly. Please come back and visit sometime and I personally give you guys a free surfing lesson! Best Regards and God bless all of you!
Safety Manager, Tom Hogue, was driving to a show up location during Hurricane Irma’s storm restoration process and noticed something in the middle of the road. His first thought was that it was some type of small animal but as he approached he realized it was a small girl who was around 2 years old. Tom immediately braked, turned on his emergency flashers, and pulled to the shoulder of the road. He then checked for traffic, exited his vehicle, and warned vehicles to stop as he ran toward the child. Oncoming traffic stopped and another driver exited his vehicle and also ran toward the child. Both men took hold of the small girl’s arms and removed her from the roadway. A woman came running up who did not speak English and kept repeating “Gracias!” As the two men watched the child and mother return to the house they looked at each other, shook hands and hugged. They then returned to their vehicles and continued on their way.

Tom Hogue received a Quanta Commitment Coin, during Quanta’s Risk & Safety Conference, for his heroic efforts.

I am writing this letter from my office in Hollywood, Florida, two short days after being struck by Hurricane Irma. Irma is one of the worst hurricanes ever to strike Florida. I am sitting in an air-conditioned building with full electrical power and phone service. This stands as a great testament to the marvelous efforts displayed by the American people in responding to this crisis. I am truly proud to see the people of Florida, along with those who unselfishly traveled to our area from other states, come together to address our problems so quickly and efficiently. Here in South Florida our utilities are provided by Florida Power & Light (FPL). I must give FPL kudos for bringing in excellent companies from other states to assist in the repair efforts. One such company was M. J. Electric, which sent a crew to carry out repairs at my condominium. These workers, who I understand hail from Minnesota and South Dakota, are not only top-notch professionals who got us up and running in what surely must be record time, they are also some of the nicest gentlemen I have had the pleasure to meet in my entire 85 years!

Sincerely,
Murray D. - Hollywood, Florida
I want to thank the linemen who were in my neighborhood in Titusville, Florida today fixing lines. They were super nice and we really appreciate them coming all this way to help us.

Kelly M. • M. J. Electric
September 15 at 5:18 pm

A million thank you’s to you all, especially the three linemen that showed up in my backyard on the Space Coast of Florida to fix a blown transformer from Hurricane Irma. Florida appreciates you so very much!

Fawn G. • M. J. Electric
September 15 at 5:36 pm

My family owes a HUGE debt of gratitude to M. J. Electric for leaving their families to come here all the way from Michigan to restore power in little ole Wahneta!

#ThankYouMJElectric
To Thank Each One of You

We appreciate everything you all did, your hard work, in the hot Florida sun, leaving your families to help ours.

Thank you again for all your help!

Love,
Joy, Mike, Tag & Lola

from Boca Chica Neighborhood in Boca Raton, FL

To the incredible employees of MJ Electric!

Knowing people nice as you gives life a brighter touch.
And so to each and all of you —
thanks very, very much!

I’m not sure when headquarters of MJ Electric restored our power after Hurricane Irma but myself, my husband + 2 English Bulldogs + our whole neighborhood wants to thank you all for what you did.
We were without power for 5 days and you put it all back together so quickly, I couldnt thank you in person.

Hi Guys!

Thank you for restoring power (and light) to our neighborhood after Hurricane Irma! We were so surprised to have it restored so quickly (we were in the dark for only 3 days — we expected it to be several weeks since so much of Florida lost power). I was especially excited to see that you came all the way from Michigan, which is my home state! I will always have a soft spot in my heart for Michigan! :p

P.S. Say hi to the U.S., eh? :)

Sept. 21, 17

...my world's a little brighter!
Voice of Florida Power & Light

During Florida Power & Light’s Hurricane Irma restoration effort, I was assigned to manage crews from M. J. Electric to work out of our Gulfstream Park staging site. This group was led by M. J. Electric’s General Foreman Ray L. and Greg J. These very capable men took on all the jobs we assigned to them and completed them in a safe, professional, efficient and expeditious manner. Their contingent of 64 men were the most professional, knowledgeable, and safe working enthusiastic group that I have ever had the pleasure to work with. I was very impressed with their safety conscience work methods, which included the wearing of rubber sleeves cradle to cradle which had to be almost unbearable in the 90+ degree heat we experienced during their time here in South Florida. This group of line workers completed a tremendous amount of work in multiple areas, including South Broward and Miami Dade County. They had to contend with the after hurricane traffic, many road and job site hazards, and the South Florida heat. All the work they completed to restore thousands of our customers in this challenging environment was done without any injuries, incidents, or so much as one complaint. They handled angry, frustrated, and desperate customers concerns with compassion and a determined effort to complete the jobs. This is a testament to Ray and Greg’s leadership which was by far superior to anything I have experienced in past restoration events. It would be a pleasure to work with these gentleman and their crews again so please make known my recommendation that M. J. Electric be considered to come back to assist FPL’s restoration efforts should the need arise again.

Sincerely,
Chris M.
Florida Power & Light

Voice of TECO Energy

I wanted to take a moment to thank you and your crews for the help M. J. Electric provided to Tampa Electric after Hurricane Irma. I would also like to thank two of your employees for an act of generosity towards a few of our customers while working in Winterhaven Service Area. They were working in a mobile home park that had a few homes with broken meter poles. Service couldn’t be restored until the poles were replaced. The customers were very upset and said they couldn’t afford to have the poles replaced. Two of your employees immediately pulled several hundred dollars out of their own pocket and gave it to them to help with repairs. I can’t imagine how appreciative the customer must have been. That act alone shows the character of these two men. I’m sure you are as proud to have them as employees as we were to have them here. I hope they get the recognition they deserve. You guys be careful going home and thanks again for everyone’s help.

Sincerely,
Tim Halse
Supervisor Contractor Management
TECO Energy

STORM RESPONSE
Jerri V. H. Wrote...

Bentley is my tortoise and went missing right after we were hit by the hurricane. I am so grateful to these guys for all they’re doing for our devastated community! Despite how tired they must be, they all still had smiles and clearly cared enough to call me when they found my missing tortoise. Thank you hardly seems appropriate for all you and your co-workers have done and continue to do but it comes with my heartfelt appreciation! Be safe. I hope you get to return home soon!!